

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. Cancelled.
2. Cancelled.

[25.]3. (currently amended) A method of returning a weight from a weight field of a database wherein said database has at least one data field for storing a set of data relative to a corresponding article, packing material, and container, and wherein said set of data comprises at least said weight field, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) initiating a cost determining routine in a shipping system application at a first node;
- (b) entering a description of said corresponding article, said packing material, and said container into a first data field of said rate determining routine;
- (c) transmitting a query from said routine to said database for a weight associated with said corresponding article, said packing material, and said container;
- (d) returning said weight to said routine; and
- (e) displaying the cost to ship the article, packing material and container.

[26.]4. (currently amended) A system for determining the weight of an article, packing material, and container to be shipped, said system comprising:

- (a) a data processing system located at a first node, said data processing system further comprising a shipping system application, said shipping system application further comprising cost determining means for determining a carrier cost to be charged for shipping of said article, said packing material, and said container;

(b) first data entry means for entering a product code of said article, a code of said packing material, and a product code of said container into a first data field of said shipping system application;

(c) transmission means for transmitting a query for a weight associated with said article, said packing material, and said container, from said shipping system application to a database located at a second node and then returning said weight to said application for use by said rate determining means;

(d) second data entry means for entering said weight into a second data field of said shipping system application as an input parameter; and

(e) calculating means within said cost determining means for calculating said cost for shipping said article, said packing material, and said container to said particular destination based upon a set of one or more input parameters.

[40.]5. (currently amended) A method of providing for weight-based determinations of one or more articles to be shipped, the method comprising the steps of:

a) initiating a cost determining routine in a shipping system application at a first node;

b) entering a code or a description of each one of said one or more articles into a first data field of said routine;

c) entering a code or a description of the container in which the articles are going to be shipped;

d) transmitting a query from said routine to a database located at a second node for a weight associated with said each one of said one or more articles and said container;

e) returning said weight to said routine for use in calculating a cost for shipping said each of said one or more articles and said container;

f) entering said weight into a second data field of said shipping system application as an input parameter; and

g) determining said cost for shipping said each of said one or more articles and container based upon a set of one or more input parameters.

[41.]6. (currently amended) The method of claim [40]5, wherein said initiation of said routine is via Internet or modem and where said initiating site is remote to said database.

[42.]7. (currently amended) The method of claim [40]5 wherein said initiation of said routine occurs at a data processing system co-located with said application and said database.

[43.]8. (currently amended) The method of claim [40]5, wherein said database further comprises a set of codes (such as UPC or EAN) data.

[44.]9. (currently amended) The method of claim [40]5, wherein said database further comprises a set of data comprising a recorded weight associated with a set of one or more articles wherein said recorded weight is entered by a system operator.

[45.]10. (currently amended) The method of claim [40]5, further including the steps of:

entering a code or a description of the packing material that is included in the container to be shipped; and

determining the cost for shipping the packing material.

[46.]11. (currently amended) The method claimed in claim [45]10, further including the steps of determining the weight of the packing material using the volume of the container minus the volumes of the articles in the container multiplied by the density of the packing material.

[47].12. (currently amended) The method of claim [40]5, further including the steps of:

storing the cost for shipping each one or more articles and the container in a completed container data base at the second node;  
submitting said container to a carrier for acceptance; and  
determining by the carrier the cost to ship said container.

[48].13. (currently amended) The method of claim [47]12, further including the step of:

isolating the containers that do not have the proper postage.

[49].14. (currently amended) The method of claim [48]13, further including the step of:

billing mailers who have not paid sufficient funds to ship said container.

[50].15. (currently amended) The method of claim [48]13, further including the step of:

refunding monies to mailers who have overpaid to ship said container.

[51].16. (currently amended) The method claimed in claim [47]13, further including the steps of:

comparing the stored weight for shipping the article and container in the completed container database with the weight determined by the carrier to ship the container; and

querying the manufacturer of the articles and containers concerning their actual weight if the compared total weights are not the same.

[52].17. (currently amended) The method claimed in claim [51]16, further including the step of:

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updating the weights associated with each one or more articles and said container at the database located at the second node.